

State Tribal Relation Interim Committee
Ft. Belknap Reservation

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs Report

2013 Activities

as of 10/3/13

This report provides information on the activities of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs as required in MCA, 90-11-102.

State-Tribal Relations Committee
October 3, 2014 - Day 1
Fort Belknap Indian Community Council

Exhibit 21

Director of Indian Affairs

The Office of Indian Affairs was established in 1951 by the Montana legislature to facilitate effective tribal-state communications with special attention to the discussion and resolution of issues that Indian peoples face regarding their unique political status and as full citizens of the state of Montana. The Office of Indian Affairs serves as a liaison between the state and the tribes and promotes economic development, environmental protection, education, support for social services, and enduring good will.

Director's Responsibilities (MCA, 90-11-102)

The director is tasked with:

- Meet with Tribes quarterly to be acquainted with issues confronting the Indians of Montana;
- Meet with executive branch directors on issues arising between Montana's Indian citizens, tribes and state agency personnel and programs;
- Report to the Governor's cabinet meeting concerning issues confronting Indian people and tribal governments;
- Advise the legislative and executive branches of the state of Montana of those problems and issues
- Make recommendations for the alleviation of those problems and issues;
- Serve the Montana delegation in the federal congress as an adviser and intermediary in the field of Indian affairs;
- Report in detail at every meeting of the interim committee of the legislature responsible for acting as a liaison between the legislature and the tribal governments those actions taken by the state-tribal economic development commission established by 90-1-131 to carry out its duties;
- Hire, with the concurrence of other members of the state-tribal economic development commission, a tribal business center coordinator and a federal grants coordinator, and subsequently provide administrative support for both positions.
- All executive and legislative agencies of state government may within the area of their expertise and authority provide assistance to tribal councils or their official designees requesting assistance on any matter relating to education, health, natural resources, and economic development on Indian reservation lands.

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs

I have visited many of the tribes with Governor Bullock and Director Mike Tooley. We have listened and discussed many issues impacting Tribal Nations.

Blackfeet Nation

The tribe is the process of renewing and amending their State-Tribal Agreement between them and the Department of Livestock. They amended the Wolf/Grizzly Bear agreement to add the reimbursement language for grizzly bears.

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have expressed interest in negotiating their Title IV-E State Tribal Agreement. We have started discussions with the tribe.

The tribe has renewed and amended their State-Tribal Agreement between them and the Department of Livestock. They amended the Wolf/Grizzly Bear agreement to add the reimbursement language for grizzly bears.

Crow Nation

The Crow Nation has expressed interest in negotiating the Class 3 Gaming Compact. We have started discussions with the tribe.

Back To School Tour

Governor Bullock held a Back to School Tour. We visited the Browning, Poplar, and Polson Schools. During the tour we also stopped in to check in with the Tribal Council. Governor Bullock spoke to the students of the importance of education and also listened to some of the kid's life stories. It was a quick trip, but a necessary one.

Build a Stronger Montana: End Childhood Hunger

I presented at the "Build a Stronger Montana: End Childhood Hunger" conference to discuss collaborations with state and tribal governments, organizations, and communities to end childhood hunger. This topic is important to many communities and families. It impacts families in many different capacities. There was participation from most of the Tribes.

Department of Corrections

I had the opportunity to visit Deer Lodge Prison, WATCH and START Programs. I learned of the programs. I was able to see the treatment centers and curriculums. I have attended the WATCH Program annual pow-wow. There are many Native Americans in each facility. My goal is to set up a tour for the Montana American Indian Caucus and Tribal Leaders to visit the programs. We have also discussed establishing a curriculum to bring in tribal spiritual and elected leaders to share their culture.

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education Meeting

I attended the MACIE Meeting to listen to the Office of Public Instruction give there division update and special education report. I also reported to the committee. I was able to listen to the concerns of the committee.

Making the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 Work

I attended the “Making the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 Work” Conference in Great Falls. The discussion of the ICWA law was focused:

- Improved understanding of the tribal sovereignty and tribal interests in protecting children, strengthening Indian families, and preserving cultural identity.
- Improved understanding of the state’s role in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 including legislation, judicial practice, child welfare policy, social work practice, advocacy for Indian children, staff training and supervision.
- Improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all who have an interest in improving the lives of vulnerable American Indian children and their families.
- Communication, dialogue, and shared learning that will improve outcomes for vulnerable American Indian children and their families.
- Identify and create opportunities for continued dialogue, communication, and practice development to improve outcomes for vulnerable Indian children and their families in or at risk of involvement in the foster care system.

State Tribal Economic Development Commission

The upcoming State Tribal Economic Development Commission meeting will be at the Blackfeet Reservation. The meeting will be a strategic planning meeting and a Technical Assistance Providers Best Practices Conference October 9-11, 2013.

The Main Street Montana Project Indian Country Survey results vary. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were identifies. The total of 92 people took the survey. According to the results below:

- **Strengths** are 1.) Tribal College Opportunities for education and training, 2.) Quality of life—Outdoor recreation/environment, 3.) Large land base.
- **Weaknesses** are 1.) Resistance to change and collaboration 2.) Lack of growth/economic development strategy 3.) Access to capital
- **Opportunities** are 1.) Tourism 2.) Increased support for entrepreneurial endeavors 3.) Unique business opportunities available to sovereign nations
- **Threats** are 1.) Shrinking balance between private and tribally owned businesses 2.) Cultural misunderstandings 3.) Soft skills and mentoring needs

The survey can be found at the following website

<http://www.mainstreetmontanaproject.com/survey/>.

The commission has voted to increase the Montana Indian Equity Fund grants to \$14,000 per application. There will be one application for each tribe. The “At Large” grants were eliminated and the funding will be utilized to improve technical assistance and best practices for providers to small businesses.

Previously awarded grant recipients must meet the following criteria in order to receive additional funds: 1.) A new technology 2.) A new product or line of products 3.) A new service or services. Those applications that have greater leverage because of bank loans or greater cash contributions from the owner of the business will rank higher (to encourage the use of traditional financing and more adequately capitalize business start-ups and expansions).

Boards and Appointments

Governor Bullock has continued to appoint American Indians to boards and commissions. Boards and Advisor Stacey Otterstrom of the Little Shell Tribe is the point of contact if you have a recommendation. Some of the recent appointees include:

2013 Governor’s Tribal Relations Report

The Governor’s Tribal Relations Report is in final review process. The complete appendix of the state tribal agreements and an updated list of the Governor’s appointments to the Boards, Councils, and Commissions are online at www.tribalnations.mt.gov.

Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program

The STEDC Program has received all the applications from each tribe. This is the second time the STED Commission is in a position to oversee a program in its existence. This is a success for the Commission and programs established to assist with job development and language preservation in Indian Country.

Montana Association of Counties Meeting

The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) invited me attend their annual Reservation Counties meeting. They also requested I invite tribal leaders to attend the breakfast meeting. I introduced the Confederated Salish and Kootenai and Ft. Belknap Tribes to the committee. The tribes spoke briefly of their current relationship with their local county governments and concerns. I believe this is the beginning of a dialogue between the State of Montana, Tribal and County governments. They have expressed interest in working with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to provide cultural training.